



### OUR SPECIAL STORY BY KELLY

In the year 1990, at ten or eleven years of age, Geovanny began to call Copprome his home. About six years later, in August of 1996, I traveled to Honduras with Patricia King for the first time as a "youth to youth" volunteer. Geovanny and I met the very first day, and although I did not realize it at the time, that's where our story began. I fell in love with the children of Copprome and returned once in 1997 and twice in 1998. I always planned on continuing to return to Honduras, but the volunteer group that had taken me to Honduras stopped going after 1998, due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch.

Geovanny and I went on living our separate lives. Influenced by my experiences in Honduras, I went to college to pursue international development and language studies, studied abroad, and went to grad school. Back in Honduras, Geovanny completed his technical studies in 1998 and went into the work force. We kept in touch (although we spent quite a bit of time out of touch) mostly with the help of a Jesuit friend and, at the time, Radio Progreso host, Father Joe Owens.

Geovanny came to the US in 2002, and over the next several years, he learned English, secured solid employment, and became a permanent resident. Above all, Geovanny, as a result of his loving, hardworking, and humble manner, became embraced as a member of not only my family, but by almost everyone he met. After an 11 year plus journey, and I mean journey, Geovanny and I were finally married on February 17, 2008. We were thrilled that Sister Teresita, who had taken Geovanny in as a child, came all the way from Honduras to join us for the wedding!



Geovanny and I returned together to Honduras in January of 2009, and were reunited with Geovanny's large and wonderful family, including two sisters who grew up at Copprome, and three new baby nephews! Despite the distance, Geovanny's role as big brother has continued over the years, and I suspect it always will. During our trip, we also had the pleasure of meeting up with some of the now grown-up children of Copprome from Geovanny's past, as well as meeting the "new" children of Copprome.

We owe a great deal of thanks to Sister Teresita, who, on top of all of her other duties, has acted as our "in country" eyes and ears over the years. Certainly, neither of us would quite be who we are, or where we are today, if it were not for Copprome. For this we are grateful and look forward to a long and lasting relationship with Copprome and the journey ahead.

**Don't forget!!!**  
**A Day at the Races Fundraiser**  
**Monmouth Race Track • August 9th**

## EARTHQUAKE UPDATE FROM PAT KING

At 2:30 in the morning on May 28th, Honduras was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.1 in intensity. Honduras is a land of devastating hurricanes and floods, but earthquakes are something new! The epicenter was about 5 miles north of Roatan, one of the Bay Islands off the north coast in the Bay of Honduras. Fortunately, there was very little loss of life and none of the children or staff at Copprome was hurt. The children however, were very frightened and spent the next few nights sleeping outside of their dormitories on the patio.

The major damage in El Progreso, was sustained by the Democracy Bridge; there are two parallel bridges that span the Ulua River- the older span, built in the 1960s, collapsed, while the newer span had major damage, and is now closed for evaluation, causing massive disruption to traffic from San Pedro Sula, the industrial capital of Honduras, to the north coast of Honduras. After the first quake, there were a series of aftershocks followed by two or three more quakes, all occurring at night, further frightening the children.

With God's grace, the handful of buildings at Copprome survived with little damage as our shelter is very stable and well built. But because of all the aftershocks and quakes, cracks quickly appeared and over the next few days, parts of the walls fell away. The worst damage Copprome sustained was that the few computers used by the children in the technology room as well as those in the office fell off the tables and broke. At Copprome, we have always put education first, so this has been a serious blow to our mission, to the staff and most importantly, to the children. And the only television that we had at Copprome also fell from its stand and was broken beyond repair. As you can imagine, all of the children feel that this is a much greater loss!!!

We are so fortunate to have such wonderful staff at Copprome, they work so hard to make the children feel secure, even at such trying times as these. The children have gradually moved back to their beds, knowing more than ever, that Copprome is strong in so many ways and that they are secure in a loving and stable family.

Thanks to a number of friends of Copprome, we have to date collected \$1,800 towards a fund to replace the computers. Our goal is \$3,500. So we are a little over half-way there. If you would like to help, please send us your check, payable to the House of Friendship, and mark it "For the Computers". As always, please keep our precious children in your prayers.

## How Can I Help Copprome? by Tony Rosa

We often get asked the question - how can I help Copprome? In these tough economic times we all feel pinched and after reading about the tremendous needs of our children at Copprome it's easy to feel that you have to make a big cash contribution to make a difference. It only costs about three dollars per day to care for a child at Copprome. Can you spare three dollars? That's one day of happiness to a child.

Our children need so many of the same day to day things that we all need, everything from toothpaste to a television. You name it our children need it. If you want to help just think about what it might cost to buy some of the things on the needs list that follows, then write a check for that amount and send it in. It's that simple, it's that wonderful and it's that effective. Thanks and God Bless You....Tony

### Copprome Needs List

**Food, medicine, gasoline for the busses, school books, paint, clothes and underwear, shoes, sneakers, sandals, school uniforms, shampoo, body lotion, toothpaste, bath soap, bath towels, deodorant, toothbrushes, bedding, pillows, comforters, beds, dressers, storage bins, kitchen supplies, large cooking pots, cups and plates, knives and forks, kitchen utensils, stove and oven, computers, printer, office supplies, lawn mower, garden tools, and on and on and on!**

## WHY I CAN'T WAIT TO GO BACK BY LOGHAN GUILLES

Honduras is a small country in Central America that is only slightly larger than the state of Tennessee. While being so small, the country is still home to approximately 7.8 million people, and is known as the poorest country in Central America. You would not believe how some of the people live; they have so much less than us and are still happy people. The simple things that we take for granted, such as good food, clean running water, clothing, toys, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, showers, and other things of that nature, they live without. Some of the Honduran people in the cities are still well off like we are, but in the villages, the people live in a completely different way than we do.

Over Spring break last year, I had the opportunity to go to Honduras with the Henry B. King Memorial Brigade. The Brigade is led by the founder, Pat King, who every year takes a group of people to the villages of Honduras to provide medical care for the poor. The group consists of pediatricians, dentists, physical therapists, women's health doctors, emergency room doctors, many registered nurses, translators, and aides who have all volunteered their time; I went on the trip as an aide. The way the people live there really does stun you. In most of the villages the people do not have running water, and still use outhouses. The ovens are all outdoors, and they still use clothes lines to dry their clothes. It really just hits you when you see it!

The first day that we went to a village, I got to see first-hand the kind of medical attention that some of these people need. All but maybe one or two of the people, at the most, from each village have ever seen a doctor in their life. Some of the people have serious injuries, and the stories behind some of them are unbelievable. One man came in to see one of our doctors for a leg infection, but the really surprising thing wasn't his leg. A while ago, the man was in a bar, and got into a bar fight with another man, and he was attacked with a machete. He was hit repeatedly over and over again on the head, and had a number of scars from the fight. He had suffered a fracture to his skull when the incident occurred. We also saw a couple of men who had been shot. The first day, a man came in who had been shot in the stomach three years earlier, and some of the doctors from our group removed the bullet from the man's stomach. Later in the week we also saw a teenage boy who had been shot in the knee only three days earlier. The bullet went all the way through the boy's knee, in one side, and out the other.

The first four or five days that we were there, I got to work in pediatrics. Most of the kids in the villages of Honduras have never seen a doctor, which makes it somewhat difficult to help them, because a lot of them are completely terrified. A lot of what I had to do in pediatrics was helping to calm the children down, and holding them down while they screamed, so that the doctors would be able to examine them. Some of the things that I saw with the children were extremely sad. We had one girl come in with cataracts in one eye, which made it so that she could no longer see in the affected eye. There was also a similar problem with a little boy who had what the doctor thought was glaucoma. One of his eyes was larger than the other, and did not react when put under different lighting conditions, which meant he could not see out of that eye. Sadly, with most of the vision problems that we saw, such as these, there is no longer anything that can be done to help the children; the window of opportunity for correction is no longer there. These kinds of eye problems can sometimes be corrected, but only if caught at an earlier stage, which makes it hard when you realize that there is nothing that you can do for them.

One family that came in had a really touching and sad story. A grandmother brought in her four grandchildren, one of which had a mental disability. The grandmother did not really understand, and when we told her that there was nothing that we could do for her grandson, she started crying uncontrollably. She then told us how she was supporting her daughter and her daughter's four children because their father had left them and gone to the United States, and no longer kept in contact with them or sent them any money. She also said that they could no longer really afford to feed the children, which explained why they were so skinny. You really cannot help but to be touched by the things that you see in these villages.

While the stories of what the children had gone through were upsetting, they somehow managed to stay positive and the children loved us. They would always come up to us and start conversations. They thought that we were interesting, and that the things we did were funny. They loved having their pictures taken too, because they had never even seen cameras before. Whenever you took a camera out in a Honduran village, you would have kids swarm you to see the pictures on the screen. You really just could not help but fall in love with these children, they were all so sweet, kind, and loving towards us. I really appreciated the opportunity that I was given, and I cannot wait to go on the trip again next year.

## MEET OUR CHILDREN



This newsletter's featured child is Julissa Marbella Manzanares. Julissa was just three years old when her mother brought her to Copprome, her father's identity never known and her future very much in peril. Julissa was born into a very difficult environment, no father and a mother who suffered from alcoholism, no home of their own. Her grandmother had recently died and with no other family to care for them, her mother brought the child to Sr. Teresita, hoping that Julissa might somehow survive. Julissa's mother did visit her on the few occasions during the year when she was well enough to make the trip to Copprome but alcohol soon took its toll and Julissa was left all alone in the world.

Julissa is now 16, having spent the last 13 years at Coppromé, it has become the only home this child has ever known. Due to all of the efforts of Sr. Teresita and the staff at Copprome, and with your financial support and prayers, Julissa is now in the second year of a program at the Institute of Notre Dame from which she will soon graduate with a degree as a Bilingual Secretary.

Julissa's mother died years ago and with no other family, Julissa would have been abandoned had it not been for Copprome. Julissa has managed to overcome her past, she has a sweet disposition and artistic talent; she has hopes and dreams still to be fulfilled and talks about continuing her university studies in Puerto Rico.

